



New Strategic Plan to be Developed for Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site

DEAR FRIENDS,

This October will mark thirty years since Congress established Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site (Olmsted NHS). The NPS is honored to be the steward of the site, where America's foremost landscape architect, his notable sons John Charles and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and their renowned firm designed thousands of parks, suburban neighborhoods, campuses, and private estates.

We are pleased to send you this newsletter about the renewed strategic planning effort being undertaken at the Olmsted NHS. The site has made enormous progress in thirty years, but "Fairsted," as Olmsted named it, now faces new challenges. Recently the site received funding to revise and update the park's general management plan. Your perspectives and input are critical to the creation of a renewed vision for the site and an enlightened plan for the future.

A planning team of park managers, NPS planning staff, and consultants are preparing studies and gathering data. Starting with our primary mandate—to preserve the historic site and its archives—the plan will address topics such as traffic and parking; the needs of visitors, students and researchers; how best to serve known audiences and reach new ones; and how to identify shared goals and engage more effectively with our Brookline community.

Please join us at an **OPEN HOUSE** on **SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13** including a behind-the-scenes tour of Fairsted (currently undergoing major construction), and at a **PUBLIC MEETING** on **WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23** to discuss the general management plan. We look forward to working with you to create a meaningful plan for the site's future.

Superintendent Myra F. Harrison



OPEN HOUSE

at Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site (Olmsted NHS)

SUNDAY • SEPTEMBER 13, 2009

REGISTRATION & RECEPTION 1:00–4:00 PM

FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED NHS, 99 WARREN STREET, BROOKLINE, MA

Learn about Olmsted NHS at a special open house ten days before the public meeting. Tour the historic site and meet park service experts who will answer your questions about the construction project underway (the site remains closed to the general public), the historic buildings, landscape and archives, the newly-renovated barn, and the "Good Neighbors" education program in development.

PUBLIC MEETING

Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site (Olmsted NHS):
Envisioning the Future: A Community Dialogue

WEDNESDAY • SEPTEMBER 23, 2009

REGISTRATION & RECEPTION • 6:30 PM / MEETING • 7:00–9:00 PM

WILLIAM H. LINCOLN SCHOOL • 19 KENNARD STREET, BROOKLINE, MA

Help plan the future for Olmsted NHS. After a brief introductory session, we'll break into small groups to generate ideas for the plan. This will be an interesting and interactive evening and we look forward to seeing you there!

NPS seeks Public Input on Planning Issues for Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site



OLMSTED NHS NEEDS TO UPDATE its 1983 General Management Plan (GMP) because a range of issues outside its scope have arisen that need analysis, discussion and decision. The park has made enormous progress in thirty years. The NPS has cataloged and conserved all

the archives and made them accessible, restored the historic landscape, rehabilitated the historic buildings, opened the site to visitors and provided interpretation and education programs both on and off-site. Along the way, new opportunities and changed conditions unforeseeable in 1983

have arisen, raising questions that management must address.

One example of a challenge: after conservation and proper storage, the archives could no longer fit within the historic plans vault at Fairsted. The solution was to split the collection, with a portion housed now in NPS space in Springfield, MA. This hampers an efficient operation. Should we continue to absorb this inconvenience or seek another alternative?

An example of a welcomed opportunity: our generous Brookline neighbors donated to the park over five acres of conservation land on Green Hill, preserving forever the historic view of the adjacent Gardner property. How should we manage this land into the future, and what resources do we need to do so properly?

These are among the issues to be addressed in the GMP. We are confident that the planning process will allow us to address them successfully, aided by the thoughtful contributions of our publics.

PLANNING ISSUES FOR THE PUBLIC TO CONSIDER

The list of issues is large. In order to stimulate thinking in advance of the public meeting, we offer a few suggested questions below. How would you address these issues? What other ideas should be considered?

HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOOD

F.L. Olmsted was deeply attracted by the pastoral qualities of Green Hill. How can we balance the modern, evolving needs of the neighborhood with the desire to preserve the historic character and setting?

What are the best ways to allow more people to enjoy the site without adding traffic? How can the site be more bike/pedestrian friendly? How might we encourage visitors to use other forms of transportation?

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

We serve a professional audience with deep knowledge of the Olmsted's work as well as visitors being introduced to the Olmsted heritage. What are your thoughts on how we can best meet the needs of both types of visitors?

What programs or events would be fun or interesting for you to attend, either at the Olmsted NHS or other places designed by them?

Some have suggested a satellite visitor center along the Emerald Necklace and trolley service to the site. Do you like or dislike this concept, and why? Would this enhance the visitor experience?

EDUCATION

We receive inquiries from education programs serving students from young children to senior citizens. What are your thoughts about how we might best serve different students?

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

How can we make this site and the Olmsted's work in general relevant and interesting to ethnically diverse urban audiences?

HISTORIC ARCHIVES

We have focused on conserving the original, hard copy Olmsted archives. How important is making them available online or via electronic formats?

How can we best ensure wide access to the Olmsted archives and preserve them safely for the next generation?

OPERATING THE SITE

We'd love to have more people enjoy the site, but want to protect it against wear-and-tear. What are your ideas for how to manage this?

The shared staff for Olmsted/Kennedy/Longfellow is headquartered at Olmsted, which renders the second and third floors off-limits to visitors. What are your ideas for balancing the needs for administrative space with the importance of providing access to visitors?

Given Frederick Law Olmsted's national impact, should our site attempt to take on a national leadership role regarding his legacy? If so, what should it look like?

PARTNERSHIPS

Based on our legislated mission "to preserve and interpret for the benefit, inspiration, and education of present and future generations the home and office of Frederick law Olmsted..." are the partnerships you think we should explore—or deepen—with other organizations, either locally or nationally?

FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE:

Fairsted and the Legacy of Frederick Law Olmsted

FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED NHS, at 99 Warren Street, Brookline, MA, preserves and interprets the home and office of pioneer landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted and his successor firms.

Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903) is widely recognized as the founder of the American landscape architecture design profession and the nation's foremost park-maker. The site, which he named Fairsted, with its 19th-century house, attached early 20th-century office wing, rustic barn, and designed landscape, retains the pastoral character that drew Olmsted to Brookline, MA, in 1883. Today Olmsted NHS serves as both an historic site allowing visitors to experience the physical environment of the Olmsted period and learn about he Olmsteds' work, and also as an actively used archival center for students, researchers and academicians studying the extensive design documents and business records produced by the firm.

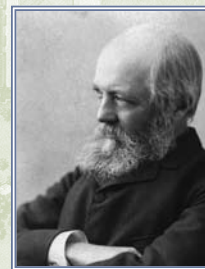
Some of Frederick Law Olmsted's early designs are very well known, such as New York's Central Park and the grounds of the U.S. Capitol. His move to the Boston area was prompted in large part by a major commission to design the Boston/Brookline park system, known colloquially as the "Emerald Necklace."

After relocation to Fairsted, Olmsted was able to expand his business and start a system of apprenticeships that produced some of the most famous landscape architects of the next generation and also proved the foundation for the academic study of landscape design. Joined first by his son John Charles (1852-1920), and later by Frederick, Jr. (1870-1957), and their partners and associates, ultimately the firm designed over 5,000 projects in 44 states. Individual parks and park systems, many state capitol grounds, school and college campuses, residential suburbs, arboreta, and private estates all over the country and in

Canada became testimony to the influence of the Olmsted landscape design tenets.

To a remarkable extent, the Olmsteds' design and conservation principles shaped the evolving physical environment of America, and their participation in the for-

"WE WANT A GROUND [PARK] TO WHICH PEOPLE MAY EASILY GO AFTER THEIR DAY'S WORK IS DONE, AND WHERE THEY MAY STROLL FOR AN HOUR, SEEING, HEARING, AND FEELING NOTHING OF THE BUSTLE AND JAR OF THE STREETS, WHERE THEY SHALL, IN EFFECT, FIND THE CITY PUT FAR AWAY FROM THEM..." —*Frederick Law Olmsted*



ABOVE: Frederick Law Olmsted

ABOVE BACKGROUND: plan for U.S. Capitol

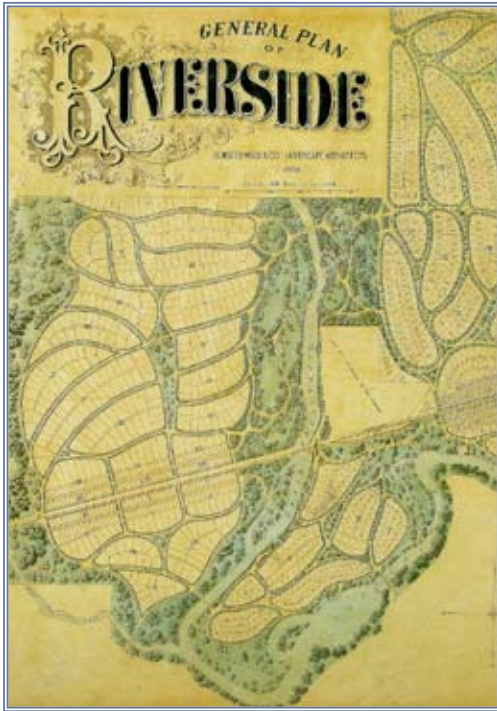
LEFT: Olmsted Brothers employees outside of Fairsted, c: 1898

mation of major institutions taking root in their day, such as the National Park Service and the American Society of Landscape Architects, extended the reach of their ideas.

Today the Olmsted Archives contain over one million records documenting their design work, including 140,000 drawings and plans. The collection reflects the history of landscape architecture and environmental design in the United States.

Also included in the collection are financial and administrative records and reports, lithographs, planting lists, photographic prints and negatives, and design models dating from the 1860s to 1980.

Congress created the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site in 1979. The Olmsted NHS, which has been undergoing rehabilitation, is expected to re-open to the public in 2010.



FAR LEFT: Portion of general plan of Riverside by Olmsted, Vaux & Co., Landscape Architects, 1869.
LEFT: Acadia, Otter Cliffs

FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN PROCESS

Organizing the Planning Process and Initial Research	2008
Public Outreach and Public Meeting	Spring 2009
Draft Plan Available to Public	2010
Public Meeting to Comment on Draft Plan	2010

This newsletter is a publication of the National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, ©2009. For additional information please contact Superintendent, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, 99 Warren Street, Brookline, MA 02446, or call 617.??? x???. Visit us on the web at www.nps.gov/???i.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, 99 Warren
Street, Brookline, MA 02446
Brookline, MA 02446